

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for oligomerizing C_n-olefins by reaction of a C_n-olefin-containing reaction mixture over a nickel-containing fixed-bed catalyst, comprising from 10 to 70% by weight of nickel oxide, from 5 to 30% by weight of titanium dioxide and or zirconium dioxide and from 0 to 20% by weight of aluminum oxide as significant active constituents and silicon dioxide as the remainder, wherein the reaction over the fixed-bed catalyst is carried out continuously in the liquid phase and run at a conversion to oligomerized C_n-olefins of from 10 to 30% by weight based on a throughput of the reaction mixture through the catalyst in a single pass.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the reaction over the fixed-bed catalyst is run at a conversion to oligomerized C_n-olefins from 10 to 25% by weight, based on the reaction mixture.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the oligomerization is essentially a dimerization.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): A process as claimed in claim 1 carried out at from 30 to 300 °C and a pressure in the range of from 10 to 300 bar.

Claim 5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1 which is carried out adiabatically in a shaft oven and in which part of the ~~reacted~~ reaction mixture is returned to the reaction.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ a feed mixture is fractionated in a column to separate C_n-olefins and oligomers prior to the reaction.

Application No. 09 914,532

Reply to Office Action of May 19, 2003

the C_n-olefins are returned to the reaction, the ~~reacted~~ reaction mixture is returned to the column and the oligomers (C_n-hydrocarbons) are discharged.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~reacted~~ reaction mixture after the reaction is fractionated in a column to separate C_n-olefins and oligomers, the C_n-olefins are returned to the reaction and the oligomers are discharged.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mixture is passed over a protective bed wherein catalyst poisons are removed, prior to the reaction.

Application No. 09 914,532

Reply to Office Action of May 19, 2003

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claim 1 has been amended by reinserting the inadvertently omitted term --at--, from the previous amendment. Each of Claims 6-8 have been amended by changing "reacted mixture" to --reaction mixture--. In addition, Claim 7 has been amended by replacing "the" with --a-- in line 1. Finally, Claim 9 has been amended by reinserting the inadvertently omitted term --mixture-- from the previous amendments.

No new matter has been added by the above amendment. Claims 1-4 and 6-9 remain pending in the application.